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President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/1)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.5)

Mr. Arcilla (Philippines): I wish at the outset to express our appreciation to and to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his comprehensive report (A/50/1) and for the various initiatives he has undertaken and pursued to further enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations and its Secretariat.

The United Nations, for 50 years, has in general done its best to act effectively and in a timely manner in respect of the various demands of our times. It has responded with creativity and innovativeness, notwithstanding severe constraints, including its diminishing financial resources. Considerable attention has been paid to preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. Several major initiatives, including those relating to the search for peace in Angola and to the restoration of democracy in Haiti, have been adequately supported by the Organization.

The United Nations has also ensured the implementation of various post-conflict peace-building measures. Notable here is the assistance provided for the conduct of elections and for mine-clearing activities in various countries. Likewise, the Organization has successfully undertaken a number of peace-keeping operations, despite the fact that the need for such support mechanisms has grown in number and complexity in recent years.

In the fields of development and humanitarian action, the Organizations — either through its own Department of Development Support and Management Services or through the various United Nations organs, agencies and other bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, and the regional commissions — has carried out and implemented various technical cooperation activities, despite financial constraints. The Organization's portfolio of technical cooperation projects and the demands for timely and efficient project delivery have grown considerably through the years.

The Organization has also undertaken various operational follow-up activities in the implementation of decisions and agreements emanating from several international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development.

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There is much more that the developing countries would like the Organization to undertake, in keeping with various international agreements and instruments designed to support their efforts to achieve sustained growth and development and to address, in particular, the eradication of poverty and the urgent needs of the most vulnerable segments of their societies.

The globalization of the world economy and the deepening interdependence among nations have also presented new challenges and opportunities, as well as risks and uncertainties, for the future of the world economy, in particular, for the development prospects of developing countries. The Organization must respond to these new challenges and opportunities by providing the necessary support to enhance its role in formulating appropriate policy guidelines on international economic and development issues, as well as ensuring that the requisite operational follow-up measures are carried out.

Obviously, my intervention today cannot fully do justice to the wide-ranging topics covered in the report. We can only highlight some of its major elements and, possibly, focus on the bottleneck that prevents the Organization from providing optimum service to Member States.

The Secretary-General has on several occasions brought to our attention the financial situation of the Organization. The report unequivocally reiterates the point that the United Nations now faces very serious financial situation. It details the indices of the severity of the current financial problems, including the millions of dollars owed to Governments that have contributed troops and equipment to peace-keeping operations. The report asserts that "This is manifestly unjust". (*A/50/1, para. 32*)

It is disturbing to note that, despite our collective recognition of the problem — as stated in General Assembly resolution 41/213 — and of the requirement to fulfil our financial obligations promptly and in full, we have failed to act decisively on the Organization's perennial problem of cash availability. My delegation therefore once again appeals to the Member States concerned, particularly the largest contributor, to make every effort to pay all their dues unconditionally, in full and on time.

We welcome the initiatives being pursued by the Secretary-General to streamline the Organization into a more focused and integrated machinery. We support the Secretary-General's efforts to increase its efficiency. "Downsizing" has been implemented and will continue in the years to come, as is already reflected in the biennium budget for 1996-1997, and in various organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations.

However, we wish to reiterate the point that an institution can pursue genuine reforms only under a policy framework that seeks to fully realize its mandate. When we speak of reforms, we should be very clear on the premises underlying what we would like to achieve. We must refer in unmistakable terms to the efforts to achieve economy and efficiency in fulfilling completely the mandates of the bodies, organs and agencies of the United Nations system, not to efforts that will compromise effective programme delivery and be substitutes for measures aimed at significantly strengthening the United Nations role in development.

It is on this note that our Organization has to pause and assess the impact on its mandates of streamlining exercises. We clearly need to see where we stand and to proceed cautiously on other, related measures.

Before concluding, may, I, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, convey the views of the Group on the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.5. We take note that this draft resolution will be considered under agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences", which has been allocated by the General Assembly to the Fifth Committee for its consideration. After careful and in-depth consideration of the report of the Committee on Conferences, the Group of 77 and China are of the view that the control and limitation of documentation are integral parts of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under that agenda item. Hence, the Group of 77 and China will carefully review the elements of draft resolution A/50/L.5 in the Fifth Committee within the broadest context of the agenda item entitled "Pattern of conferences".

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The report (A/50/1) of the Secretary-General is the best possible summary of the successes, realities and frustrations of our Organization. My Government is firmly convinced of the enduring usefulness of the United Nations, strengthened by the indisputably favourable balance of the cumulative record of its entire system. The performance of the Secretary-

General and the Secretariat as a whole deserves our deepest gratitude and support.

The subjects covered by the Secretary-General is so extensive and varied that it will certainly receive the special and detailed attention of councils, committees, working groups and experts. We hope this will result in original and practical conclusions rather than repetition and lengthy documents and speeches.

With regard to reforms, we must focus more on improving systems and methods and the dynamic of their functioning than on purely structural reform or, what is worse, the generation of flow charts for cosmetic purposes. In my experience, the repetition of speeches and resolutions, far from enhancing implementation, dilutes and dulls the will to act. One of the important objectives of the reform contemplated in our Organization is to narrow as much as possible the gap between resolution and implementation. In this regard, nothing could be more helpful than clearing a path by avoiding repetitive resolutions, documents and speeches and adding substance to existing studies and simplifying to the extent possible the work of the new Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. My delegation has already expressed its views on the timeliness and functioning of that Working Group and hopes express itself again when the report of the Secretary-General is submitted for our consideration, as suggested by our delegation last July.

Superfluous though it might seem to insist on administrative considerations as opposed to political aims, the most dangerous thing for an institution is to risk its prestige and moral strength by appearing to be more prone to words than deeds. While supporting the Secretariat's efforts to improve the way it functions and reduce its expenses, I must say that at the root of the reform of the United Nations lies a reform of ourselves — of Governments and their delegations — through economizing on talk and strengthening the finances of the Organization.

My delegation has already mentioned the reform of the Security Council. Since 1945 our positions have been on record. As regards the Trusteeship Council, we believe it can be left as is, in accordance with the Charter, without cost.

However, we would like to place very special emphasis today on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. Other delegations have made comments in this connection with which we concur, and my Government is ready to cooperate actively in reorienting the United Nations and its entire system towards its primary preventive objective: improvement of the human condition. We must root out the social and economic causes of inequality, oppression and armed conflict. We must disarm the world, control the manufacture of weapons and gradually and inexorably downsize the business of the merchants of death.

We must comply with the tenets of the United Nations Charter and respect the sovereignty and opinions of States. It is all well and good to make military and economic efforts to prevent or halt conflicts, but it is first necessary to make sure that the parties have the will to accept mediation.

My Government has also insisted that we must follow up any suspicion of corruption in business or government, step up the fight against the scourge of drug trafficking and gird national economies against the violent ebb and flow of paper investment and unbridled, unmonitored speculation.

The United Nations must continue to do its best to promote and strengthen democracy in all of its political, social and economic aspects and promote ever more social justice. With clear operational objectives and a more effective and prestigious staff, our Organization will make swift progress in the coming years and peoples will no doubt contribute avidly to the finances and endeavours of the United Nations.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Surie (India): It is once again with great regret that my delegation has to speak to exercise our right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of Pakistan yesterday. That statement appears to be part of a well-orchestrated and motivated litany of falsehoods, half-truths and selective interpretations of events and facts.

True to style and consistent with past practice, the representative of Pakistan has chosen to misrepresent and selectively quote what the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization for 1995. The Government of India has taken note of the section of the report of the Secretary-General on India and Pakistan, in which he has referred to the commitment of India and Pakistan to resolve the issue peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement of 1972. The Government of India remains fully committed to this course, and will continue its efforts to revive bilateral talks, for which several proposals have been made to the Government of Pakistan. The commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the Simla Agreement, on the other hand, appears to be clearly open to question.

The Secretary-General has also referred to incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. I must emphasize that these incidents are entirely due to Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, militancy and extremism across the Line of Control. I doubt if the Assembly needs any further proof of this. This is publicly documented and well established.

In spite of numerous provocations by Pakistan, Indian security forces have exercised enormous restraint. There is no threat to peace and security in the region from the Indian side of the Line of Control, nor the international border.

The Government of India hopes that the Government of Pakistan will demonstrate sincerity to find a peaceful solution by eschewing sponsorship of terrorism across the Line of Control and returning to the negotiating table for a meaningful dialogue, as urged by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the United Nations.

It is ironic that Pakistan repeatedly refers to the implementation of Security Council resolutions. It is a historical fact that it was Pakistan which first violated the said resolutions so as to prevent their implementation at that time by refusing to vacate the aggression that it had committed in Jammu and Kashmir. As my delegation has stated on several occasions before, the Security Council resolutions cannot be implemented at Pakistan's convenience and on its terms.

India remains committed to bilateral dialogue under the Simla Agreement. In his report on the work of the Organization for 1995, the Secretary-General has indicated that both India and Pakistan have affirmed their commitment to respect the cease-fire line and to resolve the issues peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement of 1972. Let Pakistan demonstrate its sincerity to agreements that it has signed and to the cause of peace and good neighbourliness, by stopping its support for terrorism in India and returning to the path of peaceful, bilateral dialogue to which it is committed under the Simla Agreement.

Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. This is and remains an immutable fact. The only impediment to peace in Jammu and Kashmir is terrorism — directed, funded and sustained from across the border. The only solution to the problem is the vacation of aggression by Pakistan and the return of that portion of Jammu and Kashmir under foreign occupation since 1947 to India.

This response will no doubt bring forth yet another outpouring of unfounded allegations and distortions from the representative of Pakistan. I have no intention of wasting the valuable time of this Assembly any further by insisting on exercising my second right of reply.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): I am astonished at the angry diatribe of the Indian representative directed against Pakistan. In our intervention yesterday we referred to the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. In our statement we presented the following facts.

In his report the Secretary-General mentioned incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the further aggravation of relations between India and Pakistan. Can India deny this?

The Secretary-General highlighted the urgency of seeking a political solution through a meaningful dialogue. Are the Indians denying this?

The Secretary-General reiterated his offer of assistance to facilitate a search for a lasting solution. Are the Indians denying this?

In our statement we said that Pakistan had accepted the Secretary-General's offer of good offices and that the Indian Government had not accepted it. Are the Indians denying these facts?

In order to ascertain the veracity of India's baseless allegations of interference by Pakistan in

Kashmir, Pakistan has made offers on a number of occasions for the establishment of a neutral mechanism along the Line of Control. Last year we proposed that the number of observers in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan be increased to verify the alleged reports of cross-border movement. India rejected these sincere offers. Are the Indians denying this fact?

In our statement we said that 600,000 Indian troops had been deployed in Kashmir to mount a campaign of State terrorism against innocent Kashmiri civilians. Are the Indians denying the deployment of these forces?

In our statement we cited facts regarding massacres, killings, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial executions, arson and the use of rape as an instrument of war. These facts have been documented and substantiated by impartial human rights organizations. Are the Indians denying this and implying that all these reports about massive violations of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir are a mere hallucination?

Can they be denying that their occupation forces have brutally killed over 50,000 besieged Kashmiris in the last five years?

In his report the Secretary-General referred to preventive diplomacy, early-warning mechanisms, quiet diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. It is in this context that Pakistan has urged the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts for a peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Are the Indians denying the validity of these mechanisms in inter-State conduct, as suggested by the Secretary-General himself?

The Secretary-General in the 1994 report had mentioned that relations between India and Pakistan were marred by the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, one of the oldest unresolved disputes still on the United Nations agenda. Are the Indians denying this painful fact, that the non-resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute over the last 48 years has bedevilled relations between India and Pakistan?

Are the Indians denying that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory, recognized as such by the United Nations? If that were so, one wonders why the Indian External Affairs Minister would issue a statement on the eve of his visit to the General Assembly last month on the necessity for a resumption of the stalled dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Is India denying that the Security Council in its resolutions has clearly mandated that the future of Jammu and Kashmir will be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir through a free and impartial plebiscite? Is India rejecting this mechanism in contravention of United Nations resolutions?

What Pakistan is saying is that the peace and security situation between India and Pakistan is deteriorating fast because of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and that the unabated aggression mounted by Indian occupation forces against the defenceless people of Kashmir is the reason for that. Is India denying the need for ending repression in Kashmir and starting a substantive dialogue to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue?

The factual evidence against India is definitive and damning. We are tired of the Indian litany and mantra that Kashmir is an integral part of India. Kashmir has never been an integral part of India. The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was fraudulent. All of the measures taken by India to annex Jammu and Kashmir, including the election of a so-called Constituent Assembly, have all been rejected by the Security Council.

Recently, India has introduced yet another ludicrous refrain in its argument. It says that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India. The use of this word is ironic, because the Indian leaders know that the alienation of the people of Kashmir from India is complete. So much for the Indian choice of the word "inalienable".

We are also tired of India's mantra of allegations of terrorism against Pakistan. How brazenly does India try to hide the ugly fact that India today is the largest terrorist State in the world! India has unleashed terrorism not only in Jammu and Kashmir, but in all its neighbouring States. In the recent past, Indian terrorists have killed hundreds of people in Pakistan. India has abetted, sponsored and exported terrorism to the neighbouring States. It has illegally occupied Kashmir, annexed Sikkim and devoured Hyderabad and Junagadh. This is terrorism — state terrorism at its worst.

India talks of a bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. When it comes to the negotiating table, it refuses to discuss Jammu and Kashmir on the pretext that it is a part of India. It knows that, in the past 23 years, it has never talked to Pakistan on the substantive aspects of the Kashmir issue. It is because of this Indian obduracy that the intercession of the United Nations Secretary-General and the activation of United Nations mechanisms for the pacific settlement of disputes in the context of Jammu and Kashmir has become absolutely necessary. If the situation were left to Indian machinations, the whole region would be engulfed in flames and the systematic genocide of the Kashmiris would reach its tragic conclusion in a final solution.

The Indian Government tries to give the impression that there is peace and tranquillity in the region and that the only aberration is interference from Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. Cease-fire violations across the Line of Control by the Indian soldiers have been reported by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. The Neelam Valley in Azad Kashmir is completely cut off because of India's constant firing, resulting in a humanitarian crisis for 100,000 Kashmiris.

And yet India is trying to make this house believe that the situation in Kashmir is normal. The Secretary-General, during his visit to India and Pakistan last year, expressed his apprehension that the escalation of the situation in Kashmir could result in an accident. The Secretary-General's fear is still valid a year later — in fact, even more acutely than a year ago.

We appeal to India to halt its repression in Kashmir, recognize the legitimate right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination, and agree on a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the mechanisms prescribed by the United Nations and the Security Council.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform Members that the sponsor of draft resolution A/50/L.5, having considered that the subject matter of the draft resolution is under the purview of the Fifth Committee, has decided to submit the draft resolution to the Fifth Committee under agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences".

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: I should like to inform members of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General has received a letter informing him that Mali has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to make a brief remark on the forthcoming special Assembly plenary meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. In order to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of the proceedings, I have addressed a letter dated 16 October 1995 to all delegations seeking their assistance in keeping the time limit for speeches.

As Members know, the General Assembly has decided that each speaker will have five minutes to make a statement during the Special Commemorative Meeting to be held on 22, 23 and 24 October. I am aware that this time limit may be difficult to observe. I must stress, however, that the ceremony will be seriously disrupted if that limit is not strictly respected. For instance, if each speaker spoke for seven minutes instead of five, we would have an extra six and a half hours of speeches.

I therefore urge every delegation to convey, on my behalf, to its head of delegation that the fixed limit of five minutes should be rigorously observed. Otherwise, I may be forced, against my will, to interrupt the speaker and to ask that the speech be concluded. Members can well imagine that I would rather not have to take such an action, out of respect for all the Heads of State and Heads of Government

and other dignitaries who will honour the United Nations with their presence.

I would be grateful for Members' earnest cooperation in this regard.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly

(b) First report of the Credentials Committee (A/50/559)

The President: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its first report (A/50/559) reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Having considered* the first report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

"*Approves* the first report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its first report.

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for an explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Abolhassani Shahreza (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its reservations regarding paragraph 4 of the first report of the Credentials Committee, contained in document A/50/559, on the credentials of Israel.

For this reason, and in line with the position of my Government on the issue, my delegation wishes to dissociate itself from the part of the said report referring to the approval of the credentials of Israel.

The President: We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 10 of its first report (A/50/559). The Credentials Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/4).

The President: I call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, who wishes to explain the position of his delegation on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The fact that the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya did not object to the report of the Credentials Committee in document A/50/559 in no way implies recognition of the credentials of the Israeli's delegation.

Despite the recent developments regarding the Palestinian question, what is taking place now cannot be construed as forming the basis for a permanent or just solution. The solution could be achieved only on the basis of full recognition of all the rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which are the rights to return to its land, to self-determination and to the establishment of a democratic State in Palestine with Al-Quds as its capital, where Arabs and Jews alike can live.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 36

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War: draft resolution (A/50/L.3 and Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that by paragraph 3 of resolution 49/25 of 2 December 1994, the General Assembly decided to hold a solemn meeting of the Assembly on 18 October 1995, that is, today, in commemoration of the victims of the war.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* This solemn meeting today is dedicated to what is undoubtedly the most memorable and meaningful date of this century, which had a significant impact on all subsequent developments in the international community and world politics.

The end of the Second World War 50 years ago is engraved forever in the memory of mankind as the most tragic event and, at the same time, the brightest. We are mourning today the millions of lost human lives and inexpressible human suffering, whose echoes can be heard even now. But at the same time, we are proud of mankind which has managed, after uniting its efforts, to win in truth the greatest historic victory over the forces of destruction, subjugation and suppression of human dignity.

The main lesson of this landmark experience is obvious — the way to the survival and prosperity of the world is through the cohesion and collective efforts of all constructive forces and through the decisive resolution of minor differences for the sake of common paramount interests and goals.

In celebrating this anniversary, we can rightfully say that the difficult path followed by the international community over the last half century has made it possible to draw a line under the outcome of the Second World War, to turn this sorrowful page of history and to direct our expectations to the future. As we all know, the roots of the future lie in the past and in the present.

Today's world dialectically combines within itself both dangers and threats fraught with instability and the risk of new global shocks, while nourishing the growth of an essentially new and different non-confrontational system of international relations. Through ever more active multilateral efforts in confronting common challenges, we see more clearly the basic principles of such a system. It is based on the balance of interests, equitable cooperation and the partnership of different States and international institutions, the inadmissibility of the emergence of new dividing lines and the establishment of cooperative approaches to the problems of security and development.

Moreover, we have a unique instrument for advancing towards a new world order — the United Nations, an organization born from the ashes of the World War to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and conflicts.

Basing itself on the experience and lessons of the Second World War and on the traditions and ideals of the anti-Hitler coalition, and combining political will and the efforts of States and nations, the international community today has quite enough strength to carry out this cornerstone task enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Reaffirming its intention to continue to make an active practical contribution to the attainment of this goal, the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have submitted a draft resolution (A/50/L.3 and Corr.1), entitled "Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", and the annex, "Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War".

Paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the Second World War, and remembering with gratitude all those who have struggled against dictatorship, oppression, racism and aggression, the Declaration emphasizes, in particular, the vital need to undertake all possible efforts to put an end to existing armed conflicts, to avert such conflicts in the future and to overcome the manifestations of political, economic and social inequality.

The States of the world are called upon to:

> "reaffirm the commitment to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; to redouble their efforts to put an end to all conflicts and to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and racial hatred, *inter alia*, by drawing the lessons that emerge from the history of past conflicts; to promote democracy and human rights and to support universal access to culture; to focus their efforts on the objective of creating conditions for the general progress of humankind in larger freedom." *(A/50/L.3, para. 5).*

We are pleased to note that an impressive group of United Nations Members have become sponsors of this draft.

The sponsors, who now include Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Mongolia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru,

the Republic of Korea and Uruguay, expect that the draft resolution and the annexed Declaration will be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The year 1995 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the most devastating war ever witnessed by mankind. The European Union, together with Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic, in whose name I have the honour to speak, consider it highly appropriate that we, the Member States of the United Nations, today pay a special tribute to the extreme sacrifices wrought by the War.

The peoples of Europe remember only too well the horrors of the Second World War and the great suffering that it inflicted upon so many: not only the soldiers, sailors and airmen from all continents who lost their lives in battle, but also the innocent civilians who perished in their homes, and, in particular, those millions of men, women and children who died in the death camps. The memory of the atrocities of the Holocaust committed against the Jewish communities all around Europe will be an everlasting warning against all kinds of totalitarian and racist ideologies.

Today we commemorate all victims of the War in a way that should go beyond remembering those who lost their lives, their health or their possessions throughout the years of conflict. We should go beyond mourning the millions of innocents who suffered. Today we should preserve the unfading memory of all victims for future generations by honouring the men and women who fought for the restoration of human dignity. They serve as an inspiration to all those who today dedicate their lives to the preservation of peace and freedom. Our thoughts must also turn to the victims of present conflicts.

Those tremendous sacrifices were not in vain. Justice and democracy finally triumphed over dictatorship and aggression.

The end of the Second World War established the necessary conditions for the creation of the United Nations. The countries recovering from the devastation of the war renewed the hope of humanity in the future by designing a new structure dedicated to fostering coexistence and international cooperation. The San Francisco Charter is a living monument to the lessons learned from the war.

The same is true of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which formed the basis for all subsequent international human rights instruments. The European Union remains convinced that, in the words of the preamble to the Universal Declaration,

> "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

As the President of the first session of the General Assembly, the eminent European Paul-Henri Spaak, stated in his opening address on 11 January 1946,

> "For years these tens of millions suffered, endured, accepted hardships and sacrificed, and now they ask for their reward. The reward for which they ask is peace, a just and enduring peace, and that we must bring them". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, Plenary Meetings, 2nd meeting, p. 49)*

The scourge of war has not been fully eradicated. But the United Nations and the principles of its Charter are essential tools for the maintenance of peace and the struggle for fundamental human rights.

The European Union was forged out of the experience of that war and a desire never to repeat the suffering it caused. The European Union is composed of countries that fought on opposing sides in the Second World War and of others that took no part in the conflict. Most of the Union's member States were directly affected by the war and by the division of Europe that resulted. The very existence of the European Union, its vigour and cohesiveness and its openness to new members are proof of our determination to make such a war impossible in Europe again.

As the European Union solemnly declared in Messina on 2 June last,

> "The Europe of freedom which was constructed after the Second World War has guaranteed its peoples an unmatched period of peace, stability and prosperity".

The solemn Declaration adopted by the European Council at Cannes on the occasion of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary emphasizes the extent to

which the United Nations, which was created in response to the tragedy of the Second World War, helped in the reconstruction of Europe and in aiding the refugees of the conflict.

Today, just as the European Council did last June, we solemnly reaffirm our attachment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and renew our commitment to serving the ideals and action of the United Nations.

The European Union therefore wholeheartedly supports the draft declaration just introduced by the Russian Federation in the General Assembly today. The 15 European Union countries actively participated in the preparation of this text. All States members of the European Union are among the sponsors of the draft resolution, contained in document A/50/L.3. The European Union hopes that the draft resolution accompanying the Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Muller (Marshall Islands): It is a great honour for me to be here today to speak on behalf of the Marshall Islands. It is the view of my delegation that this solemn occasion should be one on which we pay particular respect to the memory of the many millions who died in that fateful war.

I am also here today to try to bring to the attention of delegations here that the war in the Pacific involved more than the great Powers of the day. I want to honour the memory of those Pacific islanders who fell in the struggle for freedom and justice and in the fight against oppression. In that sense, we feel a strong sense of solidarity with peoples on other shores, in lands far away from us, who also went through untold suffering.

Of the two World Wars, it was the second that brought devastating pain and suffering to the shores of the Marshall Islands. It was the most horrific of times, when we saw the blood of our loved ones paint our ocean and lagoon waters crimson red. Most of the victims were either shot or beheaded by faraway warring States, which suspected our people of aiding the opposition. Our people simply got caught in the crossfire. In particular, my people faced the most severe hardships towards the end of the war, when supplies were dwindling.

Still haunted by the horrors of a war they did not cause, many of our elders remained silent until fairly recently. They were unable to utter any recollection of that ugly war, essentially leaving our younger generation to wonder all these years: What were the losses? How did the country suffer? What was it that kept our people together? While we may not be able to fully comprehend the pain our elders experienced during the Second World War, to some degree we can ascertain its impact through the few who have been able to recount some of their experiences for us.

It was as an impoverished and suffering people that we greeted our liberation. The events that followed, which caused us to be placed under Trusteeship, are not memories that we treasure. We are still learning to deal with the results of the nuclear testing programme that this Organization allowed to proceed in our islands. Now we have come to a point in history which so closely mirrors what happened in the Marshall Islands. It seems that the international community will yet again stand by while a colonial Power flexes its nuclear muscle and tests weapons in the South Pacific. We cannot let this go on any more.

As we remember our fallen countrymen, their legacy must be the impetus in our task of ensuring that the scourge of war is eradicated once and for all and replaced by preventive diplomacy. This is the only way forward if we are fully to implement the provisions of the Charter. The "Agenda for Peace" outlines areas we can commence working on today to ensure a safer world tomorrow for our children. To this end, it would be necessary to reflect on and repeat those successes the Organization has had in peace-keeping efforts. We must also constructively review and criticize the failures that have occurred.

The international community, having experienced the pain and suffering brought upon it by two world wars, opted to establish the United Nations for the purpose of ensuring international peace and security, a task which is unparalleled in both scope and complexity. This purpose should remain our guiding principle today and tomorrow in our quest for global peace in a world where we all work constructively together, in a world free from want, from fear and from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): The year 1995 can rightfully be called a golden one in the calendar of international life. It is the year that marks the fiftieth

anniversary of the events which played a crucial role in forming the structure of international relations and which paved the way for further evolution of humankind.

The starting point was the end of the Second World War. In remote 1945, the heroic struggle of freedom-loving nations of the world resulted in the victory over fascism and militarism, over the ideology of the supremacy of one nation over the other. We are proud of the fact that a significant contribution to that victory was made, along with the peoples of the coalition States, by peoples of the former USSR, including the people of Ukraine, whose victories upon the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War determined, in fact, the victorious outcome of the Second World War.

Regrettably, this great historic victory was attained at a high price: the heavy of loss of human lives, incredible suffering, unprecedented material losses. It is testified to, perhaps, by the fact that there is no family in Ukraine that was unaffected by the tragedy of the war and the terror of its devastating consequences.

It was the victory in the Second World War, as well as the suffering of the victims, that raised the need for the internationalization of international relations in order to prevent a new global conflict. To this end the United Nations was established as a means for better organization of the world order and as a source of human hope for the maintenance of peace and security all over the world.

We should not forget either that the end of the Second World War gave powerful impetus to national liberation movements in the countries of Asia and Africa, and considerably consolidated the bases for building a new world order, driven by the achievement of State independence by many countries of the world. At the same time, there is the other side of the outcome of the Second World War. We have to speak about what we might call the tragedy of this historical event. There was a bipolar split of the world; for a long time, the cold war's web paralysed the move to democracy by some countries.

Today we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in qualitatively new historical conditions, when the aftermath of the cold war has practically been overcome. States are no longer separated by ideological barriers. One of the largest world empires has collapsed. Newly independent States emerged, including Ukraine, and our hopes for attaining an epoch of peace, prosperity, development and democracy have become more realistic.

In reviewing the 50 years that have passed since the end of the Second World War, it is necessary to mention the lessons of that great victory as well; they are topical today. Proceeding from the philosophical conception of mankind's development as a spiral, they should become an axiom for the future. One of the main lessons proves that only through joint effort is it possible to put an end to armed conflict that is tearing regions apart, and to prevent new conflicts. There is no alternative to the settlement of emerging disputes and disagreements by peaceful means. We also believe that it is in our common interest not to allow the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The struggle against a number of negative manifestations of chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and nationalism should also be in our field of vision. It is necessary to put an end once and for all to their unhealthy forms, which propagate a scornful attitude to other peoples and cultures.

Today as never before, we have a unique chance to implement the dream of the victors of half a century ago, and to build a system of international relations and collective security, that would put an end to the attempts of any aggressor to carve the map of the world at his own discretion. We, the peoples of the United Nations, have no right to miss such an opportunity.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Fifty years ago, people throughout the world who loved and yearned for peace celebrated in many languages their great victory in the anti-fascist war. Today when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of that victory, we should not forget particularly the martyrs who gave their valuable lives for peace and the innocent victims of the war.

The world-wide anti-fascist war, half a century ago, was a war to determine the destiny of mankind, as well as the decisive battle in human history between justice and evil, brightness and darkness, and progressive and reactionary forces. In the face of the war of aggression launched by the fascists, all peace-loving peoples in the world, irrespective of the size of their country and differences in their race, colour, religious faith or social system, forged an international anti-fascist united front in an unprecedented spirit of

unity and, supporting one another with a common hatred of the enemy, waged a surging anti-fascist struggle to safeguard peace and defend justice.

On the western front, from the battle of Stalingrad to that of Al-Alamein, and from the landing at Normandy to the capture of Berlin, the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France waged a life-and-death struggle against the German fascists on every battlefield. The people of the former Soviet Union, in particular, who lost 27 million lives, made huge contributions to and sacrifices for victory in the war.

In the East, the peoples of China and of other Asian countries fought the Japanese aggressors in the same heroic spirit of sacrifice. China was the largest victim of the war of aggression launched by the Japanese militarists. As the main battlefield of the anti-fascist war in Asia, China resisted and pinned down over two thirds of Japan's total ground forces, with more than 35 million military and civilian casualties. By persisting, in the face of extreme hardships and difficulties, in the war of resistance against Japan for eight long years, in close cooperation with the allied countries of the Soviet Union and the United States, the Chinese people smashed the hegemonic ambitions of the Japanese militarists, which constituted an indelible contribution to victory in the world's anti-fascist war.

The victory in the anti-fascist war laid the foundation for world peace, opened the way to national liberation and promoted human progress, thus erecting an everlasting monument in the development of world civilization. We might say that the Charter of the United Nations, signed 50 years ago is carved on that monument.

Drastic changes have taken place with the passing of time, and history has proved to be the most vivid teaching material. The war of aggression launched by the fascists brought huge calamities to mankind. It also educated the world's people. As we are about to enter the twenty-first century, we look back with painful memories, the joys of success and, even more, deep reflection.

The past, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future. To take the road of peaceful development, it is imperative to have a correct understanding of and approach to history. Fascism brought great sorrows to mankind. That episode should never be forgotten, still less altered. To review history is not to be intoxicated with the victories of the past, but rather to draw a lesson from history with a view to developing and expanding the forces of peace, checking and removing all factors of war and avoiding the recurrence of tragedies.

One of the important political bases for the establishment and development of friendly relations between States is a correct approach to and deep reflection on the history of aggression. We express our strong concern at and condemnation of the remarks denying the history of aggression and even prettifying wars of aggression and colonial rule made time and again by some people in that Asian country that should be held responsible for launching the war. We hope that the country concerned will bear firmly in mind the historical lesson and continue to take the road of peaceful development so as to gain the understanding and trust of the peoples of Asia and the world at large.

Having paid a dear price for the holocaust of two world wars in this century, people have come to a deep understanding of how valuable peace is. The Chinese people, who have suffered a great deal from the scourge of aggression and war, know even better that peace did not come easily. At the coming turn of the century, we should ponder deeply the great importance of peace. Only with peace can there be human development and progress. A country's stability and prosperity require a peaceful international environment, and a peaceful world needs to be jointly maintained by the people of all countries. Peace can only be maintained by observing such norms governing international relations as respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and by establishing, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, a new international political and economic order that is just and fair. Any practice of hegemony and power politics in international affairs will only trigger new friction in the international or regional situation or aggravate existing conflicts, posing a new threat to world and regional stability and peace.

History has shown time and again that differences in social systems and ideologies are not factors inevitably leading to war. Quite the contrary: countries of different social systems can unite and help each other when faced with a common enemy and a common challenge. Today, people throughout the world are still bound by the same destiny, facing the

arduous task of maintaining world peace and promoting common development. We should carry forward the spirit of unity fully displayed 50 years ago to build a twenty-first century of harmony and prosperity on the basis of respecting each other, seeking common ground while setting aside differences, living in amity and promoting common development. This is the best way for us to cherish the memory of those innocent victims of the Second World War and of those who have sacrificed their lives for justice and peace.

Pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, China has all along committed itself to the lofty cause of peace and development. We are ready to work together with all other peoples in the world to eliminate for good the scourge of war and build a beautiful world of lasting peace and common development.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): The year 1995 is truly historic, marking not only the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the sole universal Organization dedicated to international peace and cooperation, but also the end of the Second World War, the most destructive war in the history of humankind. In observing these landmarks, it is appropriate that we study seriously the lessons that history has to teach us and reaffirm our commitment to achieving lasting peace and prosperity in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. It is particularly meaningful that Member States were unanimous in proclaiming 1995 a year dedicated to the memory of the tens of millions of victims of the Second World War.

The proposed Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War presents us with four very important tasks. First, all States are urged to

> "reaffirm the commitment to refrain from the use of threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations Charter". (*A/50/L.3, annex, para. 5 (a)*)

I wish to affirm here that Japan is determined never to waver from its commitment to contribute to world peace and prosperity, and that it does not, nor will it, resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution.

Secondly, it is important for States

> "To redouble their efforts to put an end to all conflicts and to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and racial hatred, *inter alia*, by drawing the lessons that emerge from the history of past conflicts". *(ibid., para. 5 (b))*

In this context, Japan welcomes the recent cease-fire agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and appeals to the parties to the conflict to exercise the utmost restraint.

Thirdly, States are called upon

> "To promote democracy and human rights and to support universal access to culture". *(ibid., para. 5 (c))*

It is extremely important for States to fulfil this most basic requirement, which, in turn, will enable them to pursue moderate, sound and appropriate foreign policies.

Lastly, but no less important, States are required

> "To focus their efforts on the objective of creating conditions for the general progress of humankind in larger freedom". *(ibid., para. 5 (d))*

To that end, Japan will do its utmost to alleviate poverty and illiteracy and to promote public health and welfare, particularly in developing countries.

The United Nations was created with a determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. By advancing the universal values enshrined in the Charter it has grown into a truly international Organization for the promotion of peaceful and cooperative relations between States. Reflecting with deep remorse upon the past, and as a responsible Member State, Japan has made sincere efforts to foster the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Although the functions of the United Nations were often paralysed by the East-West confrontation that prevailed throughout most of the last 50 years, the new international situation resulting from the end of the cold war provides new opportunities for the United Nations and all its Member States to achieve the purposes stipulated in the Charter. The United Nations is thus expected to play a more active role in efforts towards

international peace and prosperity and in the formation of a new international order in the coming century.

To this end, all Member States must join in the effort to reform the Organization to ensure that it meets the growing expectations and demands of the international community. Reform of the Security Council to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy is of particular importance in this regard. Japan is committed to participating actively in the reform of the Organization and intends to play a positive role in the new United Nations.

In conclusion, I should like to express to the delegation of the Russian Federation my appreciation of its initiative in proposing this agenda item. My delegation heartily supports this initiative and has become one of the sponsors of the draft resolution now before the General Assembly. I am confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

Japan looks forward to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War as the beginning of a new era of peaceful and cooperative relations between all the nations of the world, centring round a strong United Nations.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The more remote the events of 50 years ago, including the end of the Second World War, become to us, the more we must ask ourselves what people have learned from that lesson. The General Assembly, which at its last session unanimously adopted a resolution entitled "Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", of which the Republic of Belarus was one of the sponsors, proclaimed this year as World Year of People's Commemoration of the Victims of the Second World War. Today this is a key issue in the work of the General Assembly.

All Members of the United Nations must unite to eliminate existing armed conflicts and to avoid such conflicts in the future. They must help to settle disputes between countries exclusively by peaceful means, and they must strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations as the central element in the system of collective security and as an instrument for the promotion of international peace and security.

The Second World War was the result of a struggle between extremely powerful States for their spheres of influence and for world dominion. Under the pretext of protecting the rights of their compatriots and mastering new, "uncivilized" territories, they occupied entire countries. Racial hatred tried to establish a "new world order", and this brought suffering and death to hundreds of millions of people.

The war drew into its lethal orbit the territory of 40 States and three quarters of the population of the planet. Enormous material resources were destroyed, annihilated — resources that had been built by mankind over many centuries. Entire cities were wiped off the face of the Earth. Cultural centres and architectural monuments were destroyed, as were works of art and literature. Indeed, the future of mankind was threatened with annihilation. Enormous human resources and enormous human suffering were involved. A whole generation of people was consumed physically and morally by the Moloch of war. There was a complete metamorphosis. What is most valuable — human life — lost all its value.

At the same time, however, millions of people thought about the future and sacrificed their lives, in the fight against aggression, to protect their homelands, to defend the peace and security of other peoples. It could not have been otherwise, because every person has a right to live on this Earth regardless of nationality, skin colour or religion. But the price paid for that right was too high. Every fourth inhabitant of Belarus gave his life.

Common sense and human solidarity triumphed over barbarism, and that is how world civilization was saved. The Second World War made people more aware of the collective need to defend peace and to prevent aggression and war. The fact that attention is focused on this most important occasion — the anniversary of the end of the Second World War — is a tribute to the millions of people who died in the fields of battle. We have a moral duty to future generations, as we enter the twenty-first century — the third millennium — to create a new world and to remember the bitter experience of human civilization so that this horror will never leap off the pages of the history textbooks and back into real life.

The Charter of the United Nations reflects the fundamental conclusions arrived at by people after learning the lessons of the Second World War. But objective and thorough analysis is necessary if we are to get at the reasons for a tragedy of such scope. The danger of chaos and the unpredictability of international

affairs today, the possibility of the eruption of new conflicts, the harsh and bitter experience of the past, the memory of the generation that gave itself — these things call on the world community to focus all its efforts on eliminating the threat to international peace and security, avoiding armed conflict and resolving disputes by peaceful means. This is particularly relevant in the nuclear era.

Is it true that there are now no armed conflicts in the world? The answer is more than obvious. When the United Nations arrived at its fortieth anniversary, there were sorry statistics to report: 161 armed conflicts in the period from 1945 to 1985, almost half of the 172 States — 44 per cent of them — in the international community having each been involved in at least one armed conflict.

During the last four decades peace has prevailed on Earth for only 26 days, and the victims of warfare have numbered 25 million to 35 million. This is sad but true. Even today, the echoes of an earlier era in various parts of the world incite local conflicts. We have not yet found a prescription to free the world from armed conflict.

The threat of the outbreak of nuclear war, with all the attendant nightmarish, apocalyptic scenarios of nuclear winter and nuclear Armageddon, is now relatively slight. At the same time, though, there is a growing danger of armed conflicts breaking out because of continuing economic, political, territorial, ethnic, religious and other imbalances in relations between States.

Europe plays a special role in the world, and Europe looks very different today. Integrationist political processes are at work, and economic systems are converging. Having achieved favourable political conditions for reducing the military threat and strengthening stability by peaceful means, we are now trying to apply the principle of a minimal level of defensive adequacy.

None the less, what was supposed to be a successful Europe is increasingly becoming a zone of socio-economic, military and political instability, and old regional conflicts are breaking out anew as an effect of changes in Eastern Europe. Complications have arisen in many parts of the former Soviet Union, and innumerable conflicts are tearing Africa apart. Despite some successes, we have not yet found a solution to the Middle East problem. In all of these conflicts the number-one victim is the human being; the development of human civilization is indeed threatened.

Against this background, the situation in Belarus is unique from the standpoint of maintaining stability in Europe. Our country, which emerged from the vertiginous events following the end of the Second World War and was one of the founding Members of the United Nations, has no territorial claims whatsoever on its neighbours, and they have no such claims on Belarus. Our country has avoided serious religious or national conflicts with neighbouring States, and in its foreign policy Belarus intends to maintain this status quo and continue to advocate its policy in the international arena.

Hence, sensible coexistence and a policy for the common good are not merely possibilities: they are realities. But the question remains: why, having achieved real progress in many areas of science and technology, has mankind not been able to find a solution to social, political and economic problems without bloodshed? It would be naive to expect an easy answer to this question. However, the United Nations must not limit itself to a declaration such as the one to be adopted today, which is nevertheless necessary and timely, or a solemn meeting in memory of the victims of the Second World War. We have before us a task for the sake of which millions of people of many nationalities have shed their blood: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. There is no more noble goal to which all Members of the United Nations could aspire.

Finally, we support the proposal that the draft resolution commemorating the end of the Second World War be adopted by consensus here today.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): Fifty years ago the world celebrated the end of the most destructive conflict in human history. We salute all those who served in freedom's cause and honour all those who made the ultimate sacrifice to create a better world. The best way to honour those who died 50 years ago is to rededicate ourselves today to the very same cause.

We pay homage to the victims of racial and ethnic hatred, in particular those who perished in death camps and in the Holocaust. We shall never forget their suffering; we commemorate their memory.

We give thanks for the blessings of democracy, justice, peace and prosperity. We are mindful that tyranny and intolerance have given way to hope and reconciliation in many corners of the world, but we are also mindful that we must persevere in facing the challenges still before us if we are to secure liberty, democracy, the rule of law and equal opportunity for future generations.

As we recall past accomplishments, we must also fix our sights on the future. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and values of the United Nations Charter. We created the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We call on all States to dedicate themselves to practising tolerance, promoting international peace and security, creating conditions of larger freedom and reforming and strengthening the United Nations to meet new transnational challenges. In that spirit, let each of us recall the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, spoken in this Hall just two weeks ago:

> "with the help of God's grace, we can build in the next century and the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom. ...In doing so we shall see that the tears of this century have prepared the ground for a new springtime of the human spirit." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 6)*

Indeed, our ground today is well prepared. As President Clinton said at the ceremony in San Francisco commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Charter,

> "The challenge of building a good and lasting peace is in our hands, and success is within our reach."

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation to the Russian Federation for taking the initiative of bringing this issue before the General Assembly. Israel has lent its support to the Russian initiative to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This is our moral obligation, not only to the fallen soldiers, the civilian victims and the honoured veterans, but also to the generations to come. The lessons of the Second World War are eternal: the evils of racism, the dangers of surrendering to despotism, the bankruptcy of appeasement and the strength of statesmanship and courage.

I was born in the land of Israel, but my parents came from Europe, where they both left behind large families. During the Second World War over 50 members of my family, including two of my grandparents, were exterminated by the Nazis. As a child growing up in Israel, I often wondered what I had missed by not knowing most of my family. As I became older, I understood that had my parents not left Europe when they did, there is no doubt that their fate would have been the same as that of their families.

But the survivors of the war have more bitter stories to tell. Many of them did not have the chance to know their parents, their brothers and sisters, their children.

For the State of Israel, the Second World War cannot be remembered without remembering the Holocaust — the systematic annihilation of six million Jews, 1.5 million of them children, by the Nazis.

The war decimated European culture and civilization that had been nurtured for centuries. The war shattered the entire world. During their 12-year reign of terror, the Nazis directed special fury against the Jewish people. Elie Wiesel put it best: "Not all victims were Jews. But all Jews were victims".

During those years the Jews of Europe were dehumanized and eventually destroyed. First they were stripped of all rights and dignity and rounded up into ghettos and separated from their countrymen. Starvation and disease hung over every Jewish ghetto. Death was a daily visitor.

As the war in Europe dragged on, the Nazis introduced their "final solution to the Jewish problem". Concentration camps and death camps were opened up throughout occupied Europe. It was in these camps that the Nazis attempted to extinguish the Jewish people as a whole. The Nazis failed in their ultimate goal of eliminating the Jewish people from the community of nations. However, the years between 1939 and 1945 marked the destruction of Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe. Two thirds of European Jewry was obliterated in a total and systematic way. Communities rich in culture and spirit, commerce and science; communities that gave the world Franz Kafka, Albert Einstein, Martin Buber, Primo Levi and Karl Marx, were destroyed.

But the Holocaust is not only about the death of six million of our brothers and sisters. It is also about the bravery and the heroism of the Jewish people in the face of horror. Many Jews chose to resist the Nazis: in the forests with the partisans, in the Warsaw ghetto, in the Treblinka death camp and in countless other places, Jews condemned to death for the sole crime of being born Jewish faced their condemners and chose to die fighting, with dignity.

Jewish soldiers joined the fight against the Nazis. Wherever partisans stood and fought, Jews stood with them: in Poland, in Russia, in France, in Yugoslavia. The Jews of Palestine during the Mandate fought proudly in the Jewish Brigade of the British army. Those who were citizens of allied countries fought as Russians, Americans, Canadians, British, French, Australians and others.

I see a moral obligation to mention the brave individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish who risked their own lives to save the lives of others. Schindler was not alone. There were righteous people in Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, France, Poland, Italy and other countries.

When the nightmare was over and the Nazis were vanquished, it was the hope of Jewish sovereignty that sustained the survivors of Nazi brutality. Upon war's end, the victorious allies set about the admirable goal of creating an international body that was committed to the cause of international peace and security and the establishment of a just society. Their efforts resulted in the United Nations, which today celebrates its fiftieth year.

Less than three years after the gas chambers ceased their operations, the United Nations passed the resolution on the partition of Palestine. This decision led directly to the birth of the State of Israel in May 1948. Since that time, Israel has become a home to hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors and their descendants. The State of Israel has become a haven for Jews fleeing persecution from around the world. At times, I think that if Israel had existed before the Second World War, many of those who perished could have been saved.

We all owe a debt of honour and gratitude to the nations that fought to end the war, to liberate the occupied countries and to give new hope to the peoples and nations of the world. It was their finest hour. I hope that we all act in a manner befitting the memory of the many millions who lost their lives to save others, to save humanity. It is upon us all to remember the lessons of the Second World War and the Holocaust: the price of powerlessness and the evils of hatred and racism. Today, as we mark the victory of good over evil, of democracy over dictatorship, the spectre of radicalism, racism and hatred still looms over us all.

Today, the United Nations Member States have an obligation to build a world based on tolerance and mutual respect. We must not slacken in our fight against the poverty and hopelessness that create fundamentalism and hatred. Our efforts must succeed.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): To celebrate the passage of 50 years since the end of the Second World War is indeed a very important occasion to pause and reflect. It is an opportunity to imbue our minds with the love of peace and tolerance and to be inspired by such a spirit in our daily conduct. It was that spirit which triumphed, five decades ago, over the forces of evil, of aggression and of occupation. Forces which threw humanity as a whole in the cauldron of a total war that razed villages to the ground, one that demolished cities, burned forests and farms, and claimed the lives of millions of people. A war that caused devastation of which many peoples continue to suffer to this day.

The object lesson of the Second World War was indeed a very cruel and bitter one. The horrifying experiences of humanity during that war should always remain before our eyes. My delegation believes that to celebrate this occasion which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations is indeed one of great historical moment, because it affords us an opportunity to take stock once again of the events of the past and to draw the object lessons from such events that we may use in addressing the problems of the present world situation, a world situation where many people still languish under the yoke of colonialism and yearn to exercise their right to self-determination.

In fact, today's world is still beset by many dangers in the shape of economic and social problems that continue to threaten the stability of the majority of its peoples. Our world is also in the grip of many regional disputes and tensions that play havoc with the security of many regions. Such disputes and tensions are made worse by the continuing existence and

proliferation of nuclear weapons that threaten life everywhere on planet Earth.

One of the most important historical events that followed the end of the Second World War was the establishment of the United Nations as an international forum for the maintenance of international peace and security, the application of the rule of law, the settlement of disputes and crises by peaceful means, and promoting friendly relations and peaceful coexistence amongst States. We, the peoples of the world, who have placed our hopes in the United Nations to guarantee our security and maintain our independence, should, on this occasion, reaffirm our continued commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, because this is the only guarantee of protection against the ambitions of certain countries that ignore the principle of full sovereign equality of States and seek to use the bodies of the United Nations to serve their own ends. This tendency can be seen, *inter alia*, in the steering of those bodies toward the imposition of punitive measures against various peoples, not with the aim of prompting a response to specific demands, as those States claim, but with the aim of achieving premeditated ends. This indeed is a dangerous tendency in dealing with differences between States. What is worse is that those few States insist on holding the target peoples hostage to sanctions by keeping those sanctions in place for the longest possible time, without any regard for their tragic human consequences and their negative economic and social impact.

We call upon all the small countries here represented to hasten to agree among themselves on the introduction of a radical reform that would return the United Nations to what the peoples who had been victims to the scourge of war and colonialism wanted it to be. We should not continue to allow a few great Powers to dominate the United Nations and to exploit it for their own ends.

Although the Second World War ended with the withdrawal of armies from the theatres of military operations and with the guns falling silent, the serious consequences of the war are still with us. Those consequences are at the root of the backwardness of many peoples who have been made backward by the horrors inflicted upon them and the devastation their countries have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the sowing of millions of mines that were left behind by the armies of the warring Powers which had fought their battles on the territories of those peoples. Those mines still claim innocent victims almost daily and impede efforts toward economic and social development.

The Libyan people is among those peoples who suffered and continue to suffer from the consequences of the war. Libya's territory was the theatre of operations for the armies of the Allies and the Axis Powers alike. When the warring armies departed, they left behind hundreds of tons of war debris, especially mines that were planted in our farms and deserts and under our very homes. Over the past 50 years, those mines continued to kill our innocent citizens. Available statistics prove that the number of those who have been killed by exploding mines is in the hundreds, not to mention the thousands who have suffered permanent injuries. On several occasions, my country asked the Powers concerned to furnish us with the information that would enable us to locate those minefields and requested those Powers to assist in clearing those mines.

Today, I wish to renew, through this Assembly, our request to the countries responsible for planting those mines to respond to the resolutions of this Assembly and of other international forums, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. Those resolutions call on the countries concerned to provide the necessary information on those mines and other types of war debris, to provide technical assistance to remove them and to pay compensation for the damage they have caused.

The events of the Second World War have now become past history. What is important now is to look at the international situation that prevailed after the war and to consider the consequences it had. Historical facts show that, both before and after the war, many peoples were victims of aggression, domination and colonialism, and that such a situation had lasted, sometimes, for hundreds of years. Now that the manifestations of colonialism and foreign domination are about to disappear forever, the least the colonized people could expect is an apology from colonialist Powers to the peoples they colonized for the aggression, persecution and degrading treatment they inflicted on those colonized peoples. The former colonial Powers should pay those peoples fair compensation for the looting and plunder so that colonialism, with its consequent acts of aggression,

domination, occupation and exploitation, may be effaced for ever.

Mr. Velliste (Estonia): This year, 1995, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of hostilities of the Second World War. Tens of millions of people perished in that war: soldiers and civilians, men, women and children. The memory of the Holocaust will forever remain a warning to humanity of acts committed by totalitarian and racist ideologies and societies that lack democratic control. Today we commemorate all victims of the war.

The end of the Second World War created conditions for establishing the United Nations. The countries recovering from the devastating war renewed their hope in the future. Despite the fact that, even today, cynical violence and bloodshed are taking place in many parts of the world, we cannot underestimate what has been done by the Organization to open up the prospect for a more peaceful world. The establishment of a community based on new principles — the United Nations — was one of the most remarkable results of the end of the Second World War.

It was in 1991 that the Republic of Estonia, once a member of the League of Nations, was finally able to join the Organization, stating its strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The goal of Estonia is the establishment of normal, productive relations with all countries. Lasting peace can only be assured through friendly and mutually trustworthy cooperation between States, based on compliance with internationally recognized norms and standards.

Now that 50 years have passed, the world has gained sufficient distance to allow an honest evaluation of the past. The legacy of the Second World War includes, among other things, a separate chapter on some countries, including my own, Estonia, that had to struggle with the consequences of this devastating war for decades. For Estonia, the Second World War was finally over only on 31 August 1994 — last year — when the very last foreign soldier left Estonian soil. A year later, on 26 September this year, the last remnant of the long occupation, the Paldiski nuclear facility, was dismantled. The ghosts of the past are gone. After 50 years, at least the lifetime of a whole generation, Estonia can continue on the path of democracy interrupted as a result of the collusion between Stalin and Hitler.

The best way to pay tribute to those who perished during the hostilities is to avoid further confrontation and enhance friendly relations between States. Conflicts often have a long history of open and hidden threats, of mistrust and aggressive claims. Estonia is calling upon all States to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country. The post-cold-war world can leave no room for such concepts as "near abroad" or zones of influence for attempts at a new division of the world, for "legitimate geopolitical interests" or the right to "armed protection of compatriots" in the territories of neighbouring States. Countries should make every effort to avoid actions undermining the goals set by the Charter of the United Nations.

Fifty years seems a sufficiently long time to allow the raw wounds to heal and to uncover the long-suppressed truth. We have therefore been gratified to note that this year a number of countries have taken significant steps, like setting up a compensation fund for the victims, admitting the errors of the past, or offering an apology for aggression. All these steps help to heal the old wounds and contribute to better relations among nations.

Let me conclude by expressing the conviction that together we shall continue to foster international peace and stability. Estonia, for its part, will pursue its policy of positive engagement, and calls upon all other States to do the same.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): Fifty years ago, the Second World War came to an end. It was by far the most devastating war in the world's history. For Poland, its first victim, the war lasted the longest — five years, eight months and eight days. My country was particularly heavily afflicted by the atrocities of the war, but the war took a heavy toll of human life among all nations. Millions of people perished.

Questions concerning that part of the history of the world will always haunt us. Never will we stop wondering how the Holocaust was possible; never will we stop wondering how the whole war was possible.

The Second World War ended in victory which, unfortunately, could not be fully enjoyed by the Polish people, since it was not until 45 years after the Yalta Conference that we achieved the goal — for which Poles had fought over and above the call of duty — a free and sovereign State in a new and democratic Europe. Therefore, it was only recently that Poland, together with other States of the eastern part of the

European continent, reached the path leading towards integration into a free Europe.

During the most devastating of wars to date, intensive thought and dramatic efforts were being devoted to peace, and ways of making peace endure. Peoples and States, mindful of their tragic experience, desperately sought a world order once and forever free of war and the suffering that war brings.

Fifty years ago, the nations of the world signed the Charter of the United Nations. At the time, they set for themselves four goals: peace, equality, justice and development. But then, above all, the United Nations meant hope and belief that through common effort and wisdom, we would make the world a peaceful place to live in.

Last year, Poland launched an initiative seeking to delete from the Charter the reference to "enemy States". It is our conviction that the success of this initiative would become a symbol of the path towards peace on which we have embarked.

In our view, the very notion of "enemy" should disappear from our vocabulary and our thinking, and be replaced by a sincere appreciation of the true value of working together. The lessons of the Second World War should protect us from the atrocities that wars bring. And although we have not managed to wipe out the word "war" from the language of contemporary international relations, we must not lose our hope and faith. We need to redouble our efforts to promote democracy and respect for human rights.

At the same time, we must never take things for granted. We must never be complacent.

Let us now bow our heads and pay tribute to all the victims of the Second World War and their still grieving families. Let us also remember those who have lost their lives in all the wars that have occurred since then, and their grieving families.

The Polish delegation reiterates its support for the draft resolution before the Assembly today, support we have already expressed in associating ourselves with the statement made today by the European Union.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

I call on the representative of Israel for an explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): The Jewish people can never forget the enormity of the Holocaust. The State of Israel, as the Jewish National Home, has a special obligation to remember. An obligation to the memory of the six million who perished in the European graveyard. And an obligation to the survivors who have rebuilt their lives in Israel and elsewhere.

This draft resolution does not mention the Holocaust, but I must. For the six million whose voices have been forever silenced. For the Jewish people. For the State of Israel. And for future generations.

Israel, therefore, cannot become a sponsor of this resolution. However, we will not request a vote.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1 was adopted (resolution 50/5).

The President: The representative of France has requested to exercise the right of reply. I call on him.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the Marshall Islands once again today brought up the question of nuclear tests, although this has nothing to do with the agenda item we have been considering this morning. It mentioned specifically the tests carried out in the Pacific by "a colonial Power" (*supra, p. 29*).

I will not go back to the unfounded nature of the accusations made concerning these recent tests. The French delegation has already on several occasions refuted the assertions of a number of States on this subject. But France, a sovereign Power that is at home in the Pacific and that is included on that basis in

various regional cooperation organs, cannot accept the use — especially out of context — of offensive language that in effect impugns the legitimacy of its presence in that part of the world.

The President: Although the President of the General Assembly does not have the right to vote, I associate myself with the solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and join my voice to those of the various speakers who paid tribute to the victims of that war and pledged to promote peace all over the world.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.